

SPiRiT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

FEDERAL PATRONAGE.

It is now about forty years since the principle was first recognized that the local administrative offices of the Federal Government were proper rewards for partisan labor, and that their bestowal was a prerogative of the party in power.

The precedent established by Jackson has since been followed by each succeeding administration. The principle was afterwards still further extended to "rotation in office," in order to provide for a redistribution of patronage in cases where a party maintained its power for a second successive term.

In 1861 a new feature was engrafted upon the old system, which, in its practical results, has proved most mischievous. After his inauguration, President Lincoln very soon discovered that the demands upon his time and the vast accession of anxious labor which had been precipitated upon the Executive by the war, utterly precluded him or his Cabinet from bestowing the attention to the distribution of the Federal patronage which had previously been given.

The consequence was that every member and Senator at once became the central figure of a political ring, and the object of local animosities on the part of every unsuccessful aspirant for office. It was a good thing for the country, undoubtedly, so long as the war lasted, to divert these animosities from the administration to the members of Congress, but it was a very bad thing for the Representatives. We know of scores of instances where bright political prospects have been ruined and districts thrown into the hands of the Democracy in consequence.

THE GREAT UNWASHED.

As the warm weather approaches, our neighboring village, Philadelphia, grows sluggishly uneasy, remembering the drought of last summer and the shabby trick which her broken-down water works at Fairmount served her on that occasion. The supply of water was so low that, if New York had not sent aid in the shape of an engine, the consequences might have proved fatal to all except those leading politicians who with wise foresight abstained from themselves the use of that liquid.

We feel constrained to reiterate seriously with this prosperous village, bent on its own destruction. For certain well-known defects of hers she is not to be blamed. Cities, as well as men, inherit business energy, intellect, and aesthetic tastes; if our neighbor is hopelessly slow, deficient in literature and art, and glibly fond of terrapin, these are misfortunes, not faults. It is in her blood. Evidently she can't help it. But she was once at least honest and clean. Her founder and Washington were her sole models of excellence.

May not the mental and moral torpor of our neighbor be explained in the same way? Who lives in mud must himself be muddy. Let us again earnestly urge reformers it be too late. The hideous red-brick houses swathed in dust, and bounded by canals of shamb, are a spectacle over which angels and Gothamites might sorrow together.

THE RING AND CHARTER REFORM.

A scheme of municipal government for a million people cannot be composed under one huckleberry bush in a summer's afternoon. Yet, because Senators Genet, North, and Creamer are taking time to deliberate and perfect modifications of its structure which will command the approving votes of the country Democratic Senators and Representatives, constrain the votes of the ring members, and deserve public approbation, Republican newspapers are assailing them for delay, and joining with the organs of the ring to spread the impression that they are "compromising"—"selling out the fight against the ring."

These charges are false. The Senators we have named and their associates in the Assembly are faithful in the cause to which they have given such vigorous and effective support. The hopes which the readers of the World may have founded upon their co-operation in its war upon the ring are as reasonable as, and are nearer realization than, they have ever been. Not one of those Senators is capable of compromising with the ring, and all of them are wide awake to the fact that the ring was never to be more warily watched than now when they put down their hands and confess defeat. The lion's skin has failed, and they will, if they can, eke it out with the fox's.

A review of the record of the session—which, so far at least as the Senate is concerned, is in advance of former years—will clearly show that public business has not been delayed by the necessary delay in the discharge of the most important duty they owe to their constituents. In the first place, the Republicans have so long had control in the affairs of the State that there is scarce one city or village charter which has not been made a contrivance for assuring them some party advantage. The result is that the Democracy, so long imposed upon, are now presenting new or amended charters for almost every city or village of importance in the State, asking of the Legislature to undo this radical gerrymandering and restore to them their rights of self-government. New York city has not been the sole sufferer from this protracted radical rule. Other cities have suffered considerably, if they have not suffered so much. But to repair these wrongs has taken time, and will take more time. The charter of Utica has been amended already. Rome has been made a chartered city. The charter of Auburn and the amendments to the charters of Schenectady, Albany, Saratoga, Rochester, Lockport, Batavia, and Yonkers, as well as those of other important towns, are pending, some having passed one House, and all compelling the restoration to the people of their rightful power of self-government.

That, as we have said a dozen times, was the significance of the Democratic victory won in this State last fall; and the Legislature is hard at work redeeming the pledge upon faith of which it was elected. The work of twenty years cannot be wholly undone in one year's legislation; but this Legislature will complete the best portion of a great reformation. But it is the reform of the government of New York city which most interests the people on this island; and they will better appreciate the work that is doing for them if we disclose to them some of the difficulties of the situation.

The destruction of every ring-and-radical board in this city lets loose upon the radical members of the Legislature a horde of discontented, and brings to bear upon them and upon radical newspapers a pressure which few of them will be disposed and none of them will be courageous enough to resist—to cast their votes against any charter or any bill proposing to accomplish that destruction. Radical votes in behalf of local self-government for New York city cannot be had. Corruptible members would fear to be charged by their party press with selling their votes; unimpeachable members will not be bold and magnanimous enough to resist the pressure of radical newspapers and ring-and-radical officeholders.

But the Democratic majority in the Senate would be lost by the adverse votes of the two New York ring Senators. For some measures, like Kiernan's election bill giving to the people the choice of election officers, those Senators cannot but vote. They would not dare obstruct their passage by uniting with Republicans to defeat them. Indeed, in the Assembly Republicans united with Democrats to carry Kiernan's bill by an almost unanimous vote, and in the Senate, with some modifications, its principle is sure of general support. For other specific measures those ring Senators might with more safety refuse to vote. To one plan they might oppose their practical veto, and to another they might oppose their practical veto, and by this or that hindrance known to experienced legislators, and certain to receive the assistance of mischief-making radical Senators, all measures of reform might be staved off for a week or ten days, and so prevented altogether; for a joint rule provides that all bills introduced after the 15th of March shall not be considered in either House, save by unanimous consent, until all bills earlier introduced have been first disposed of.

forms be to shut out them and every member of the ring from public life for the rest of their days. These things, at least, the honest Democrats of New York city demand of the Legislature.—

1. An election bill giving in some fair way the choice of election officers to the people, and securing to the minority party a representation in the guard at the ballot-box. Ring rule here cannot survive an honest ballot. If the Police Commissioners' inspectors and canvassers were to sell out the spring election, they could not save the ring from defeat in the November election, with the people's inspectors and canvassers to receive and count the votes.

2. A revision of the charter making the terms of office of the Mayor and of the appointed heads of departments terminate at the same day and date, so that all the powers of government may be grasped by the people and a revolution wrought in one election. That is popular government and responsible government.

If the ring Senators dare vote against bills giving New York city these two things, then we propose to make New York city entirely too hot to contain the bodies or souls of the two aforesaid Senators.

THE APPROACHING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN—THE NEW LABOR REFORM PARTY. From the N. Y. Herald. We are on the verge of a new political campaign. The signal gun will be fired to-day in the New Hampshire election. It is apprehended, too, that in that quarter the two guerrilla factions, known as the temperance party and labor reform party, will somewhat clear the local plans and general calculations of the Republicans. In any event the political campaign of 1870, which will be opened in New Hampshire to-day, will be in its results of the highest importance, in reference to the Presidential succession and the dominant party under the next administration.

The Congressional elections of this year—in September, October, and November—will determine the political complexion of the next House of Representatives, and upon that House, in the event of an indecisive scrub race for the next Presidency, may depend the election for the succession. And why not a scrub race in 1872 as well as in 1874? The year 1824, the last of Monroe's administration, "the era of good feeling," was marked by a new organization of parties. The old Federal anti-war party, under many defeats, had gradually melted away, and the old Republican party, under Monroe, had fulfilled its mission. Thus it was said that the people were "all Republicans and all Federalists" under Monroe. Out of this happy state of things, however, four Presidential factions came into the field in 1824—the factions of Jackson, Adams, Crawford, and Clay. The election was thrown into the House and Adams was chosen. The results were a charge of "bargain and sale" against Clay by the friends of Jackson, and the fusion of the factions of 1824 into the Jackson and the Adams parties of 1828. Thus the late dominant Democratic party and the powerful Whig party were brought into existence—General Jackson being the founder and dictator of the one and Henry Clay the embodiment of the other.

The slavery agitation—"the almighty nigger"—was the ruin of both these parties. It demolished the Whig party in 1852 because of its disturbing anti-slavery affiliations, and it broke into pieces the Democratic party in 1860 because of its rampant, domineering, pro-slavery, disunion, and secession excesses and tendencies. It is probable that the Southern Democratic pro-slavery ultimatum of secession would have been tried in 1856 but for the interposition of a third party—the Know-Nothing or American movement, under Fillmore—which cleared the way in Pennsylvania and Indiana for Buchanan. In 1860 this third party had disappeared, and the Democracy, broken up North and South, between Douglas and Breckinridge, on slavery, opened the way for Lincoln and the new Republican party, boldly marching under the ensign of "No further extensions of slavery" into any of the Territories of the Union.

Then came secession and the Southern slavery Rebellion. Next, in the midst of the war, came the re-election of Lincoln on the merits of his proclamation, as a Union war measure, declaring slavery abolished in the Rebel States. Next came the contest between Congress and Andy Johnson on Southern reconstruction, in which Johnson was baffled and beaten at all points. Next the election of General Grant on the reconstruction measures of Congress as issues settled by the war; and now, at the beginning of the second year of Grant's administration, we have the settlement of all these issues of reconstruction—the abolition of slavery, the enlargement of citizenship and equal civil and political rights, regardless of race or color, fixed in the Constitution—"the supreme law of the land." So completely has this amazing revolution been carried out that a citizen of African descent now sits in the Senatorial chair left vacant in 1861 by Jeff Davis.

Thus, saving Mormon polygamy—a mere incidental issue which is settling itself—the mission of the present Republican party is fulfilled. It has no other platform now than General Grant's administration, and General Grant's policy is the mild metheglin policy of peace, economy, retrenchment, reform, and the execution of the laws. He has evidently resolved to make a good record of his administration of the Treasury; and his first year's report of nearly one hundred millions reduction of the public debt, as compared with the deficit of the last year of Johnson, is something to be proud of. So is the appreciation of the government note bearing the image of Secretary Chase to within thirteen or fourteen cents of the gold dollar. So is the fair prospect of an early resumption of specie payments and a steady extinction of the debt, and a steady reduction of our national taxes, without any very serious shocks or fluctuations in our financial general business affairs.

Upon this exhibit, and with the Democratic party still adrift, the Republicans, under the banner of Grant's administration, one would think, have but little to fear in the elections for the next Congress. We understand, however, that this new labor reform party of New Hampshire is part of an extensive organization working with a view to the next Presidency; that it counts upon all the trades unions of the country; that in Governor Geary, of Pennsylvania, it has already singled out its Presidential candidate, and that it actually calculates upon wielding the balance of power in the election. If, therefore, these labor reformers show any signs of strength in the steady State of New Hampshire, their initial skirmish in that quarter will become a matter of general importance.

held together. We see that the laboring masses of the country are restless and chafing under what they hold to be the despotism of taxes, banks and capital; and we see that after tremendous revolutionary excitements and the advent of the last ten years the public mind will hardly be satisfied with "the calmness of a calm world" and the masterly inactivity of Grant's administration.

PARTIAL REMOVAL OF THE CAPITAL TO LONG BRANCH.

From the N. Y. Sun. The social excitement of the Washington season having come to an end for the present, General Grant, discovering at last that state dinners and pell-mell hobnobbing of President, Congressmen, and diplomats have not as much influence upon recalcitrant representatives of the people as he expected, is naturally anxious for an early adjournment of Congress, in order that he may resume his travels and his enjoyments on the seaside and on the mountain tops. He has already designated Long Branch as the peculiar spot of his affections, and the centre from which he will make excursions wherever dead-head entertainments and free railroad passes may be most tempting. Long Branch, then, may be considered the summer capital of the nation. The Western people who wish to have the political metropolis moved to the Valley of the Mississippi may not like it, but that makes no difference.

With this temporary transfer of the Presidency, a general break-up of the Cabinet is to be expected. Mr. Fish, if the repudiation of the Cuban policy by Congress should not compel him to resign his office, will soon be watching the white sails on the Hudson. Mr. Robeson, on board one of Porter's steam yachts, will cruise about again in splendid luxury, like Cleopatra of old. Judge Hoar will seek solace in the Emersonian shades of Concord, and ponder then and there the waywardness of the political mind and the mulishness of Senators.

General Belknap may perhaps betake himself to Keokuk, and receive the compliments of the good citizens of that lively town on his refusal to violate the law by giving Porter the appropriation for the Darien survey. Mr. Boutwell will fall back upon his Groton farm, and from that vantage-ground challenge the Rothschilds and the Seligmans to take a loan at 6 per cent., 5 per cent., and 4 per cent., all at the same time. Mr. Creswell, the statesman of the alabaster brow, will retire to his country-seat at Elliott's Mills, and coolly rejoice over the abolition of the franking privilege. But poor Mr. Cox, having to attend to the Indians, the pensioners, the Land Bureau, the census, the Patent Office, the prisons, the lunatic asylums, and sundry other philanthropic duties, may not be able to leave, and will probably be the solitary representative of the American Government who will remain in Washington.

The corps diplomatique, the reporters, and the girls of the period, skimming all the time at the threshold of what is facetiously called the Republican Court, may be expected at Long Branch simultaneously with the Executive. This will be an excellent thing for our worthy friend Stetson, and for the other hotel proprietors of the national summer capital. They may all confidently look forward to a golden harvest, considering that by that time the country will probably have returned to specie payment.

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